

What is a Release?

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More accurately ...

... what is a staged, static release?

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A version of your project that is...

Coherent

Consistent

Complete

... and archivable.

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Does this mean my project is done?

Not necessarily!

You might still have:

- ✓ Funding
- ✓ A team
- ✓ Tasks on your to-do list, in your task management software, on your whiteboard, on your Gantt chart

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You may not have ...

- ☒ Met all your objectives
- ☒ Delivered all your deliverables
- ☒ Achieved the big outcomes of your project



But you don't have ...

- ❌ Pages that say “forthcoming” or “check back soon”
- ❌ Broken links
- ❌ Missing information (e.g., <sourceDesc>)
- ❌ Errors in your tagging
- ❌ Errors in your data (so far as you know)

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What's new about this?

Well, not much. This is how new editions of books have been published for a long time.

But in the DH world, we've tended to do "rolling releases."

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What's wrong with rolling releases?

- ☹ Your site changes every day (which is confusing for users).
- ☹ Your site is hard to cite. (That's why date of access is often required in citations.)
- ☹ Users don't really know *what* they're citing and they're nervous about citing something so protean and unstable.
- ☹ You might introduce errors at any point without knowing ... because you can't check every page every day!



What's wrong with rolling releases?

- ☹ Your in-progress experiments and revisions are visible to the world.
- ☹ If you “break the site” by committing something invalid, fixing it becomes URGENT and IMPORTANT (i.e., in the Quadrant of Panic).
- ☹ Rolling releases annoy your programmer (and you should listen to your programmer).



What else is wrong with rolling releases?

- ☹️ They're not good for your career progress. (“Is she *still* working on that web project?!”)
- ☹️ They make it too easy to start things and not finish them.
- ☹️ You're not really working towards anything.
- ☹️ You don't get the psychological satisfaction of having something DONE.



Benefits of Staged Releases

- ✓ You can block off time in your calendar to prepare for the release.
- ✓ You can give numbers and dates to the releases.
- ✓ Users can cite those numbers and dates.
- ✓ You can put them on your CV and in progress reports.
- ✓ You can use the release to motivate external contributors (more later on this point).



Benefits of Staged Releases

- ✓ It's fun to work towards the release date and check things off.
- ✓ They're good for building team spirit and sense of accomplishment.
- ✓ You can build anticipation through social media before the release.
- ✓ You can do a social media splash in the weeks after the release. "New in *MoEML* 6.4! Sujata Iyengar blogs about her experience teaching with MoEML."



How do you stage a release?

1. Pick a version number. Go up incrementally by .1 unless you are making a really big change to your site.
2. Assign a tentative date.
3. Enumerate tasks to be completed.
4. Write any new diagnostics. Decide which ones are “release blocking.”



How do you stage a release?

5. Clear all the diagnostics under “release blocking.”
6. Finalize any new content and features you want to publish in this release.
7. Write and publish release notes.
8. Set date for code freeze.



How do you stage a release?

9. Freeze the code.
10. Everyone stops doing new work. We all check the content and make *only* necessary corrections.
11. When we are happy with the way the site looks on our build server, the programmer builds the static site with the new release number, and points the URL at it.
12. Work resumes, under the number of the next release.

